



RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES and APPRECIATING PERFORMANCE

R.E.A.P. SUPERVISOR'S HANDBOOK

**Sponsored by Design and Local Programs
Developed by the Statewide Project Development Board R.E.A.P. Team**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sponsor: Bob Buckley, Program Manager, Design and Local Programs

R.E.A.P. TEAM MEMBERS

Kim Anderson, Supervising Transportation Engineer, Central Region, Fresno
Gary Bush, Principle Landscape Architect, Design and Local Programs, Sacramento
Eldon Davisson, Principle Bridge Engineer, Engineering Service Center, Sacramento
Gail Farber, Supervising Transportation Engineer, District 12, Santa Ana
Saaïd Fakharzadeh, Supervising Transportation Engineer, District 4, Oakland
Dan McElhinney, Supervising Transportation Engineer, North Region, Sacramento

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEMBERS

Jeff Funk, North Region; Bob Baxter, District 4; Dianne Steinhauser, District 4; Bob Waddington,
Central Region; Doug Failing, District 7; Anne Mayer, District 8; Rick Hopkins, District 11;
Ken Nelson, District 12



Prepared by Dan McElhinney
April 30, 1999
(Updated 7/99)

Recognizing Employees and Appreciating Performance

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BACKGROUND

“Creating a Culture of Appreciation”...

...is the mission statement written by the statewide committee selected by the Project Development Board to develop a uniform Design Program effort. “Creating a Culture of Appreciation” relays the basic message. Design supervisors and managers who foster team success already know about the immediate value and goals of the Recognizing Employees and Appreciating Performance (R.E.A.P.) effort to be announced in Spring 1999.

A culture of appreciation in the workplace recognizes contributions that employees at all levels make to our organization and the traveling public. The REAP effort offers supervisors and managers a framework of simple methods within their control to accomplish while highlighting common goals.

The REAP committee, or Team, is a variety of employees from throughout District, Region, and Corporate Design project development functions (design, landscape, engineering services, structures.) The Team brought together their individual successes and expertise regarding this topic - in order to identify the methods and tools that work in practice, resulting in **baseline recognition goals**:

- I. SIMPLE
- II. TIMELY
- III. MANAGEMENT CULTIVATED
- IV. PEER INVOLVEMENT
- V. MEANINGFUL AND SUSTAINABLE
- VI. HONEST WITH INTEGRITY

These goals were found compatible with Design’s organizational goals and objectives to.....

- Increase Effort in Technical Quality
 - Constructability emphasis
 - Customer Service Plan
 - Focused training evaluation and plan
- Reduce Product Cost and Delivery Time
- Improve Design Knowledge
- Evaluate Quality of Projects

.....and for evaluation of an effective REAP implementation plan.

This REAP Guideline is intended to provide an Action Plan of the methods and tools sponsored by the Project Development Board as a process supervisors could practice to positively reinforce desired group behaviors that meet customer needs and expectations.

RESOURCES REFERENCED

Art of Recognition

A key reference guide for REAP was developed in 1997 by State of California civil service employees for civil service employees to improve practices: “Art of Recognition - It’s a Conversation, Not a Ceremony” was published as a comprehensive guide for designing recognition strategies in an organization. It can be downloaded at site (<http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/oppd/>) and is a resource guide vital to State supervisors exploring the area of recognition.

Among other input, it provides a flowchart model for continuous improvement and various ideas to effectively integrate a recognition program or activity into a government organization. It is suggested that managers and supervisors read and desktop display a copy of this reference.

The basis of “Art of Recognition” is not about “rewards” - monetary or otherwise. Nationwide research has shown in public and private organizations that reward programs may impede reaching, or exceeding, the goals of the organization. Rewards often foster competition and degrade teamwork, reducing intrinsic motivation and rupturing relationships. Rewards may also reduce risk-taking change.

The REAP effort used this resource guide as a strong foundation for the REAP Action Plan. Other

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recognition references for the team and these guidelines are listed below:

1001 Ways to Reward Employees and 1001 Ways to Energize Employees by Bob Nelson (1994)

Washington State DOT Recognition Guidelines

Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others by James Kouzes & Barry Posner (1999)

GROUP RECOGNITION KEYS

Be Creative

Make Recognition a regular activity

Encourage peer recognition

Catch people doing things right

Benchmarking States and Employee Surveys

The REAP Action Plan was developed using examples of other organizations' "best practices". Eight States were included in this benchmarking: Montana, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Michigan, Arizona and Washington; also the U.S. Coast Guard and Southwest Airlines. Factors considered during interviews were sustainability, tools, measurable outcomes, innovative ideas and feedback methods.

Our employee input from various offices was also incorporated. Caltrans Design and Local programs employee surveys and follow up focus group meetings were held statewide with both supervisors and staff to obtain information on current techniques and feedback on a draft Action Plan. Benchmarking and Survey results are outlined below in *Survey and Staff Focus Groups Findings*.

REAP ACTION PLAN

Timeline - Phase 1

Upon approval of the Program Manager, the following timeline and activities shall commence:

PD Board Send Off	April 30
REAP DLPP Announcement	June 99
Website Active	May 3
Communicate REAP!!	May-Aug 99
Team "Travels to Train" in 30m	May-Dec 99
Supervisors' Toolkit Distrib.	May-Aug 99
REAP Guidelines Distribution	July 99
PD Board Checkup	Oct 99
Measureables Survey	March 2000
Evaluation & Improvement	May 2000

How to Recognize

The general rules are to be honest and sincere, timely and consistent, and match the recognition to the task. The REAP Team has a Supervisor's Toolkit available. 50 Ways to Recognize as suggested by employees are outlined on page 6 and 7 in *50 More R.E.A.P. Tips for Supervisors*.



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Other REAP Tools and Communication items:

Vision Posters	Certificates on Disk*
Vision Desktop stands	Post it Recognition*
Logo Mission Mugs*	Buy-a-Lunch Card*
Supervisor's Toolkit	Take-a-Break Sign*
Info Brochure	Mouse Pad, Pins*
50 Ways to Recog. Desktop Brochure	Newsletter Sample*
1999 REAP Guidelines	Principle Tips*
Pocket Book*	Letter of Recog*
Measurable Survey*	Scenario Examples*
Website and Photos	Design Categories

*Phase II items under development.

Project Development Board members plan to display and distribute visual and reference materials to office and branch chiefs uniformly statewide, initiating and emphasizing REAP in July 1999. Also see the REAP website www.ca.gov/hq/oppd for additional information.

What to Recognize

Recognition is another way of saying what we value. Recognition is based on outcome and merit - it is not based on luck and is not intended as compensation. REAP generally is based on organizational goals and objectives:



Design Quality	Technical Expertise
Delivery Partnerships	Sustained Effort
Customer Service	Teamwork
Project Engineering	PEER Recognition
Leadership/Coaching	Above and Beyond
Innovative Ideas	PS&E Contribution

When to Recognize

Recognition is a continuous improvement process whether informal in small groups or formal among large groups. Supervisors may need to adapt their style to the group situations while considering general facts about recognition.

FACTS ABOUT RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEES

The Project Development Board's Employee Recognition Team emphasizes that successful supervisors need to know the facts about recognizing employees and recommends incorporating these into local recognition decisions:

1. Everyone wants to be appreciated.
2. Recognition and positive reinforcement all do work.
3. Any work environment can be productive, motivating and fulfilling.
4. Positive reinforcement - rewarding behavior you want repeated - works.
5. In today's business climate, coercion is no longer an option to influence employees and shape their behavior.
6. Supervisors increasingly must serve as coaches to indirectly influence rather than demand desired behavior.

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7. Supervisors need to create work environments that are both positive and reinforcing.
8. Studies indicate that employees find personal recognition more motivational than money.
9. Rarely do supervisors systematically make the effort to thank employees for a job well done.
10. Praising, recognizing and rewarding employees can be easy.

Most supervisors initially believe they lack the time and creativity to do more innovative recognition - the REAP team suggestions are intended to clarify that the effort can be simple and useful.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recognition is a team effort.....

Managers	Cultivate a workplace that has a successful REAP environment
Supervisors	Know how REAP goals tie into group dynamics.
Employees	Identify REAP as a tool to further group success; suggest peer recognition ideas.
Design Board	Facilitate the state wide effort using the REAP Task Force; gather feedback.
Program Manager	Balance Design program goals with REAP direction to encourage success.
TEAM	All Teams, in Design or other divisions, should consider the value of appreciation.

Further Acknowledgements

- Focus Group Participants and Survey Participants
MIG, Inc., Berkeley, CA
- Vicki Zuppan, Website Design & Perspective Support
- Carol Dulay, North Region
- Deitra Brickey, Management Tools Advisor
- Osama 'Sam' Hassoun, Caltrans Quality Advisor

Survey and Staff Focus Groups Findings

Acknowledging as a supervisor that there are fewer ways to influence employees more successfully than with positive reinforcement - recognizing achievements that you want repeated - is the key goal.

Employees are increasingly being asked to do more and to do it more autonomously. Supervisors need to create work environments that are both positive and reinforcing, to encourage higher levels of employee performance. Supervisors must be more innovative in recognizing accomplishments and systematically make the effort simply to thank employees for a job well done.

The REAP Task Force conducted statewide written surveys and various focus group meetings of Design and Local Programs managers and staff. These groups included individuals who are working in support or working to develop reports, plans or specifications for highway, bridge, landscape, and local assistance projects.

The "50 More R.E.A.P. Tips for Supervisors" are suggestions from these groups. (See on pages 6 and 7.)



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Other employee survey findings or focus group results are below:

Basic Findings

- Keep it informal, simple, and supplemental to the other “formal” awards programs.
- Though the REAP effort focuses on project development staff, it clearly is useable by all Caltrans.
- Communication of REAP needs to be regular and consistent, just as the supervisor actions.
- Positive employee evaluation meetings that set goals with supervisor (IDP or PFP0) ranked the highest among staff as a recognition method.
- Peer recognition or announcement in front of peers also ranked very high.
- Barriers to sustainability: inconsistency, insincerity, acknowledging too many employees, unclear criteria. These were factors that REAP tools encourage to overcome.
- *Recognize all that contributed to the effort to reach a milestone or to the completion of a project.*
- A culture change is needed, but keep it fun and light with no strings attached.
- Supervisors that cultivated an environment showing recognition with merit had the best teams.



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50 More R.E.A.P. Tips for Supervisors

By statewide survey, Design Program employees suggest:

I'm the Manager or Supervisor, What Can I Do?

- Personally congratulate employees who do a good job.
- Communicate and clarify well-defined judgement criteria
- Publicly recognize employees for good performance.
- Cultivate a recognition effort using REAP as baseline.
- Hold morale-building meetings to celebrate successes.
- Ask employees to provide input on how best you can show appreciation for a job well done.

Informal Recognition Tips

- Give praise immediately or within a day or two of completing an important task.
- Use REAP post-it to give an informal note of approval.
- Place Team achievements on internet REAP website, [http: www.ca.gov/hq/oppd/](http://www.ca.gov/hq/oppd/).
- Say hello in the morning to staff.
- Provide lunch or snacks - use the REAP "Take a Break" sign.

- Organize a group picnic.
- Provide sincere thank-you emails with creativity.
- Celebrate Birthdays! An office birthday club funds it.
- Keep it light and fun with no strings attached.
- Create a Hall of Honor Wall with photos of outstanding employees.
- Support promotional opportunities!

Formal Recognition

- Among managers and supervisors, provide meaningful recognition at executive staff meetings.
- Dedicate time and resources to understand and apply for formal awards programs.
- Download and read "Art of Recognition" and other reference at [http: www.ca.gov/hq/oppd/](http://www.ca.gov/hq/oppd/).
- Invite managers to attend team meetings so they can hear first hand some of the problems and take part in solutions.
- In a monthly newsletter for the branch or office, highlight one supervisor and 6-8 staff members; their background and duties.



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Food for Thought

- Create a peer recognition at quarterly staff meetings.
- Allow employee to choose recognition type.
- Be sincere and honest.
- Keep consistent over time; refresh tactics yearly.
- Sponsor project completion celebrations.
- Organize annual staff appreciation parties.
- Gather employee feedback on methods used.
- Celebrate safety with snacks.
- Ask “Is there anything I can help you with to meet your goals?”

Public Recognition

- Provide recognition in front of peers in informal setting.
- Show appreciation for all contributing team members.
- Provide an increase in desired responsibilities.
- Sponsor a manager’s BBQ for employees and family.
- Recognize “Hot Ideas” if the ideas are adopted from employee suggestions.
- Provide 5 year length of service and retirement awards.
- Handout REAP Certificates of Merit.
- Post Copies of Customer’s Fan Mail or Email on hall board.

- Share thank-you public letters with newsletter staff for publishing.

Other Ideas that Work!

- Write a letter of commendation, cc managers and peers.
- Provide verbal appreciation when organizational goals are met.
- Be more human and caring.
- Allow staff freedom to create their own methods.
- Give supply catalog vouchers or desk accessories.
- Be committed to TIMELY recognition.
- Organize annual Candy Gram for employees and customers.
- Hold weekend sports activities involving large groups.

Last but not Least

- Provide a simple and direct meaningful “thank you” honoring achievement.
- Provide annual performance appraisal with a positive attitude and openly discuss goals for success.

